



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
PHONE (302) 577-8949
CELL (302) 893-8939
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

Landlords Receive Training to Combat Neighborhood Crime

Attorney General Biden's office offers training that focuses on fighting crime at rental properties

Wilmington – Approximately 75 landlords and property managers from throughout Delaware attended the first day-long training to give them the knowledge and tools they need to combat criminal activity on their properties and avoid legal sanctions under the state's Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act, Attorney General Beau Biden said today.

"Owners of rental properties can be important partners in fighting crime," Biden said. "They also have a responsibility under Delaware's Nuisance Abatement Act to not allow criminal behavior to take place on their properties. The training we are providing will give landlords the tools they need to help make our communities safer."

The next training course is scheduled for June 18 in the Carvel State Office Building in Wilmington. The course will last from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Landlords, tenants, and members of the community who have questions about this week's landlord training, or want to report a property to the Attorney General's office are encouraged to call the Nuisance Abatement Program at (302) 577-8345.

This training aims to address a growing pattern of criminal activity at rental properties. For example, in the City of Wilmington, where approximately half of its 32,000 properties are rentals, the vast majority of criminal nuisance complaints received in the city stem from rental properties whose owners often claim to be unaware of the illegal activity on-site. These landlords frequently fail to perform criminal background checks on their tenants, and often have deficient leases and rental applications, or none at all.

The training sessions feature presenters from the Attorney General's Office, police departments, private legal practices, the JP Court, and security specialists. Presentations cover topics including identifying gang and drug activity, criminal background screening, eviction proceedings, Fair Housing laws, City and State Nuisance property laws, and crime prevention through environmental design. The trainings are focused on landlords, but are open to anyone. While training is voluntary, failure to attend or failure to abide by the suggestions will be factored into determining future courses of legal action against certain properties and their owners.

The Attorney General's Nuisance Abatement program uses the state's Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act to identify and investigate properties where drug and vice crime is permitted to flourish, and offers property owners the choice to abate the nuisance or be forced to

defend themselves in court. The Attorney General's Office identifies nuisance properties statewide through its own investigations and in cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic associations, and neighborhood residents. To date, more than 125 nuisance properties have been rehabilitated. Additionally, 16 properties have been shut down because they were found to present an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding community.

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